

# The 9 Skills You Need to Intensify Your Leadership Impact

While some of the core elements of leadership will remain the same over time, such as creating a future vision and executing strategy, the new leadership era demands a unique collection of skills to succeed. There's no avoiding the fact that leadership is personal; it's all about relationships and communication.

BY CAROLINE KENNEDY

The findings of the 2020 Annual Leadership Development Survey Report for Training Magazine made that quite clear, coaching, and communication skills continue to be the top priority skills, along with emotional intelligence and performance management.

The survey also studied the impact of leadership character on business success, and the results were insightful. 84 per cent of high-performing organisations address leadership character compared to only 31 per cent of low-performing organisations. Where does this leave today's leaders? The answer is, confused. PwC's 23rd Annual Global CEO Survey published in 2020 reveals leaders are "struggling to know what skills they need now and in the future." It's time to get back to the heart of leadership and invest in developing the nine core skills all leaders need to intensify their impact.

## Three core segments, nine skills.

Leadership used to be all about processes and deadlines, but the world has shifted significantly since the pandemic. The Fifth Industrial Revolution is here, and it has changed jobs, skill requirements, and the way we work.

The business environment is complex, and today's leaders need to be agile thinkers and people-influencers. They need to cope with rapid and unexpected change and take their teams along on the journey with them.

Leaders who are looking for a powerful differentiator in the demanding twenty-first century, master three fundamental leadership segments: leading self, leading others, and leading business.

### 1. LEADING SELF

The best leaders aren't those who master technical skills; they're those who have invested time in knowing themselves, knowing their values, triggers, and strengths and weaknesses. They understand how these affect their actions and

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decisions. Leadership isn't solely about logic and reasoning. It's deeply entwined with the leader's Emotional Intelligence. Neuroscience shows that even if we're not aware of it, emotions influence every decision we make.

You can't lead others until you can lead yourself; therefore, executives need to reflect and be self-aware before successfully leading others. In doing so, they learn to manage their thoughts and actions, and they take responsibility for their decisions. They know what they stand for, which becomes the basis of their personal brand and their source of authority.

Interestingly, research shows that as a leader's power increases, perspective-taking decreases, executives make less effort to understand others' perspectives. Without this human connection, leaders will struggle to build strong, connected relationships with their people.

### The three most essential skills in self-leadership are:

- Emotional intelligence: developing the skill and capacity to be in sync with yourself, your emotions and the emotions of those around you.
- Self-awareness: knowing who you are as a person and leader, and how you connect and show up in the world.
- Building authority: inspiring trust and commitment from the team.

### 2 - LEADING OTHERS

No leader will be able to influence their people if they don't understand them. Without empathy – understanding what matters to them and why they think or act the way they do – the leader lacks any point of leverage. Empathy enables us to relate as humans and understand if we've connected with the people we are trying to reach. A leader's role is to consider human behaviour to create high performance. Influential leaders invest time and energy into getting to know each person on their team. They evaluate individual character traits, motives, feelings, and triggers to guide people's thinking in positive directions, helping them see the common goals and map their own way. Using empathy, leaders can communicate in ways which guide people to think and act differently. When leaders understand human behaviour, they can leverage it to understand the barriers that stop people from taking action, prevent people from owning their accountability, and enable people to break limitations, fears, and concerns to move themselves to a conclusion and action.

### The three most essential skills in leading others are:

- Leveraging human behaviour: Understanding basic human needs and working with them to ensure they are met, no matter what changes around them.
- Influence: From a position of genuine care, triggering a thought within an individual's mind, which prompts them to an actionable conclusion.
- Empower high performance: Helping free people from limiting thoughts or beliefs and discover an exciting and mutually agreed-upon way forward.

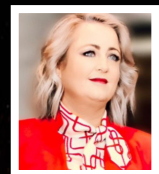
### 3 - LEADING BUSINESS

The Future of Jobs report (2020), released by The World Economic Forum, outlined the essential skills the future demands of us—active problem solving, critical thinking, and self-management and adaptability skills. These all require cognitive flexibility from leaders. With the accelerating pace of business and change, leaders who can quickly pivot, and inspire their teams to follow, are the leaders who will survive into the future.

### The three most essential skills in leading business are:

- Adaptability and innovation: Leaders who can quickly adapt to change and help their teams adapt will ensure their organisations survive and thrive on disruption.
- Critical thinking: Improving leadership thinking and problem-solving skills by analysing, assessing, and rebuilding how they think.
- Creative problem-solving: Working with and involving their teams to generate new ideas and solutions actively.

The future belongs to the skilled leaders who evolve to remain relevant. The excellent news is, anyone ready to level up and thrive in this fast-paced world can acquire these skills.



### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Caroline Kennedy,**  
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*Nine Skills You Need to Intensify Your Leadership Impact*, is an accomplished CEO and global thought leader on business and leadership. She is a highly sought-after mentor and coach to top global executives. A respected keynote speaker and author, Caroline's methods are neuroscience based to achieve rapid development and growth. For more information on Caroline's work visit [www.carolinekennedy.com.au](http://www.carolinekennedy.com.au)